

Achieving Combat Readiness Through Training Progression

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The 94th Military Police Battalion in Yongsan, Korea, continues to prepare soldiers and leaders to “fight tonight” by conducting tough, realistic, and challenging training. Over the past 18 months, the battalion has undergone a significant transformation, striking a balance between law and order and military police combat operations.

The commander of the 8th Military Police Brigade stated that Korea is quickly becoming the 12-month training base for the Military Police Corps. Based on the Corps's support to operations in the Middle East, it is no secret that the brigade receives the bulk of its junior enlisted soldiers from the Army's advanced individual training (AIT) base. Additionally, many noncommissioned officers (NCOs) come from assignments that focus on law enforcement operations and therefore have little or no experience in conducting military police combat operations. To prepare soldiers to execute operations in this environment, the brigade commander directed units to focus on the basics: physical training, soldier and leader development, weapons proficiency and live-fire exercises (LFXs), maintenance, and quality-of-life improvements.

In support of this guidance, the 94th established weapons proficiency and LFXs as the center of gravity for training. By inculcating squad and platoon LFXs, and convoy LFXs (CLFXs) as culminating events, soldiers and leaders train toward battle-focused

“high-payoff” individual, leader, and collective tasks necessary to accomplish important military police missions. Using this training strategy, soldiers quickly realize that they are not just preparing to fight in Korea but are also training toward their next assignment—possible deployment to Afghanistan or Iraq.

In order to prepare young and inexperienced soldiers, the brigade commander implemented a 6-week time management system in which units rotate through Red (law enforcement), Amber (support), and Green (mission-essential task list) training cycles. The Amber cycle focuses on soldier and leader development by using junior NCOs as trainers. We must ensure that their knowledge of training is on the same playing level and that one training standard is enforced—the Army standard. As part of this training process, NCOs must first undergo a weapons certification program that develops their skills in the operation and employment of weapons and crew-served systems (such as the MK19 machine gun). Certifying NCOs not only makes them subject matter experts but also enhances their ability to

properly train young soldiers on weapons employment during the Green cycle. Additionally, NCOs must endure a leader certification program that trains them on individual and collective tasks associated with the Green cycle. This program includes professional development, military police doctrine and tactics briefs, rock drills, and sand table exercises. Written and performance-oriented assessments ensure that leaders master the subject material and are thoroughly prepared to conduct rehearsals and execute training.

During the 6-week Green cycle, soldiers and NCOs have the opportunity to conduct individual and collective training on tasks that support response force and convoy operations. Additionally, the inclusion of an 18-hour MK19 individual gunnery skills test (IGST) has proven to be the cornerstone of the gunnery program. The IGST—consisting of eleven critical task exercises; AN/PAQ-4B/C infrared aiming light and AN/PEQ-2A target pointer/illuminator/aiming light technology; and a 4-day qualification range exercise—prepares the NCOs and soldiers for success during advanced gunnery and LFXs.

Individual Gunnery Skills Test

The brigade has a standardized IGST program to train and verify the expertise of gunners, assistant gunners, and team leaders before qualification. The IGST is supplemented by the brigade MK19 crew drill book, which further addresses each of these roles using tasks, conditions, and standards. The four main tasks imperative to success and lethality on the range are weapon zero, target acquisition and traversing, ammunition loading and stoppage

reduction, and crew coordination. The IGST consists of the following elements:

- Preventive maintenance inspections on weapons.
- Eleven tested tasks (performed over a 2-day period).
- Individual knowledge and proficiency weapon assessment.
- A requirement for MK19 gunners and assistant gunners to achieve a “GO” on 100 percent of the tasks before proceeding to the qualification range.

Basic MK19 Gunnery Qualification

The standard MK19 military police qualification tables are designed to develop and test the proficiency of individual gunners and assistant gunners, while allowing them to properly demonstrate basic MK19 marksmanship skills. Basic MK19 gunnery qualification standards consist of the following elements:

- The performance of Crew Drill 6.
- Firing exercises with the MK 19 vehicle-mounted (on a M1114, high-mobility, multipurpose wheeled vehicle [HMMWV]) and ground-mounted vehicle (using an M3 tripod) to a stationary target.
- Day and night qualification exercises (using the AN/PAQ-4 and AN/PEQ-2).

Advanced MK19 Gunnery Program

While the 8th Military Police Brigade fought for critical resources all year, the 94th was fortunate to acquire a substantial plus-up of ammunition (well beyond Standards in Training Commission [STRAC] levels) and premier training facilities known as “Warrior Valley” on the Rodriguez Range Complex and Republic of Korea (ROK) Aviation Range, BiSung. To capitalize on these opportunities, we quickly developed an advanced gunnery program with culminating events.

The new mobile gunnery concept was developed from previous CLFX after-action review comments and lessons learned from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. What we discovered was that gunners were extremely challenged to shoot at moving targets and while on the move (free-gun). So our advanced gunnery program was specifically designed to develop these skills. The program, based on the Bradley Gunnery Tables, uses stationary and moving targets with varying degrees of difficulty—with soldiers engaging targets positioned high,



Conducting convoy live-fire exercises

low, left, right, and moving on rail systems—and incorporates shooting and reloading procedures using free-gun and traverse and evaluation (T&E) configurations. It also demands the integration and synchronization of all crew members. Communication is crucial to successfully acquire, positively identify, and engage targets and maintain command and control while shooting and moving at combat speed. Soldiers must successfully complete three gunnery tables—instructional, qualification, and night-fire—within the prescribed time and ammunition allotments, as shown in Table 1. To qualify a platoon in day and night fire requires 96 rounds per gunner. Soldiers are scored using a crew coordination scorecard (in addition to the gunner’s scorecard). The gunner is still able to qualify if the team leader or driver demonstrates weaknesses, as shown in Table 2 on page 53. With young AIT soldiers having the opportunity to conduct IGST and basic and advanced gunnery, lethality percentages have increased dramatically. Soldiers tell us that it is all about good instruction, excellent training facilities, and additional weapon training time. Advanced MK19 gunnery qualification consists of the following elements:

- Engagement of targets (both stationary and moving) in a variety of sizes and at various distances.
- Method of engagement (free-gun and T&E use).
- Disposition of vehicle (both stationary and moving).
- Load and reload of weapons while traveling in a vehicle.

- Qualification for night fire (using the AN/PEQ-4 and AN/PEQ-2).
- Procedures for crew coordination.

CLFX Training Event

The CLFX training event consists of two phases: trainup and CLFXs. In a training progression methodology, a culminating event such as a CLFX challenges soldiers to be lethal with their weapon systems and demands proper execution of combat operations. A soldier’s ability to accomplish a mission extends from extensive doctrinal knowledge learned and the integration and synchronization of teamwork from three combat military police platforms.

Phase I: Trainup

Phase I assesses a leader’s ability to use troop-leading procedures, provides a detailed and relevant convoy security brief to a convoy commander, provides an operations order brief, and produces a thorough route reconnaissance overlay. Additionally, soldiers undergo a dry fire on the range to ensure that they are able to perform individual and collective tasks to standard and exercise proper safety precautions.

Phase II: CLFX

Phase II allows soldiers to execute training under simulated combat conditions. It challenges them physically, mentally, technically, and tactically and demands that they execute individual and collective tasks necessary to survive and win in combat.

Table 1. Qualification fire table

Task	Standard	Ammunition	Time
Station 1 (stationary to stationary) Engage a flank-moving BMP (Soviet mechanized infantry vehicle) target, using the free-gun method, at 660 meters.	Gunner must impact on BMP target	8 rounds	90 seconds
Station 2 (stationary to moving) Engage a flank-moving BMP target at 620 meters.	Gunner must impact on BMP target	8 rounds	60 seconds
Station 3 (moving to moving) Engage a flank-moving BMP target at 650 meters.	Gunner must impact on BMP target	9 rounds	60 seconds
Station 4 (moving to stationary) Engage a flank-moving BMP target at 775 meters.	Gunner must impact on BMP target	8 rounds	90 seconds
Station 5 (moving to moving) Engage a flank-moving BMP target at 845 meters.	Gunner must impact on BMP target	9 rounds	60 seconds
Each station is allocated 8-9 rounds (for a total of 42 rounds). If the target is destroyed with fewer rounds, the ammunition can be carried over to the next station.			

Table 2. Example of a 94th Military Police Battalion gunnery scorecard

Gunner		Team		Driver	Expert	Good	Poor
Distinguished	5 hits	Distinguished	100-90 points/5 hits	Maintain speed/ stable platform/ commands from team leader	10	8	6
Qualified	3-4 hits	Qualified	89-60 points/3-4 hits				
Unqualified	2 hits or less	Unqualified	59 points/2 hits or less				
Team Leader		Station	Team Leader	Driver	Gunner Hits		
Fire commands and target identification Seconds Points 10 10 12 8 14 6 16 4 18 2 20 1		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					
		Total					
		Scorer's signature			Date		

The CLFX provides stress, danger, and discipline and develops confidence and unit cohesion in the individual soldier and the unit.

The following is an example of a CLFX scenario used in a field-training exercise:

A light medium tactical vehicle containing soldiers and critical supplies is traveling through enemy territory to resupply the front line. Hostilities are imminent. The convoy encounters seven engagement areas at several locations along the route. Gunners return fire with devastating accuracy as the convoy continues to roll through the kill zone. At one engagement area, a Level III threat is identified and AH-64 Apache helicopters are called in for close air support. At the release point, the squad and soldiers encounter enemy resistance, requiring them to dismount and engage a series of targets at distances of 200 to 1,000 meters. The final engagement tests the gunner's abilities and forces the squad leader to integrate soldiers from the medical supply unit to successfully defeat the enemy and preserve the convoy. (Figure 1, page 54)

Planning

When planning training scenarios, they must be *tough, realistic, and relevant*—drawing from lessons learned from combat experience. They should be based on wartime environments and challenging situations. We must gain competency and confidence from soldiers and leaders through leader certification, reconnaissance, and rehearsals. To gain lethality and weapons proficiency from soldiers, training must

demand the integration and synchronization of all crew members, utilization of technology (such as M68 sighting devices), the AN/PAQ-4, the AN/PEQ-2, and bore light equipment—for use in day and night operations—and the implementation of a maintenance program to give soldiers confidence in their equipment (include weapons maintenance personnel, unit armor personnel, and representatives from the direct support unit level to support the exercise).

In Korea, it is common to build and design ranges from scratch to meet training objectives. The battalion operations and training officer (S3) is responsible for planning, resourcing, and executing all company LFXs. This allows company leadership time to focus on preparing, training, and assessing individual soldier skills and weapons proficiency and team and squad collective tasks. Since the implementation of CLFXs, the S3 shop has designed and developed two dynamic and challenging convoy lanes using the aviation range in BiSung.

The battalion followed the ten-step training model (Figure 2, page 54) to plan, resource, and execute all training events. This model provides a template for sequencing critical events and ensures the use of key principles for scenario development and the essential components required for realistic, challenging, and safe training.

One of many lessons learned is the integration of combat support elements, including the use of aviation (close-combat attacks and sling-load operations) and mortars (81-millimeter fire support). They provide combined arms experience at platoon and squad levels. This relationship has proved to be very valuable (as witnessed in Iraq and Afghanistan) and is

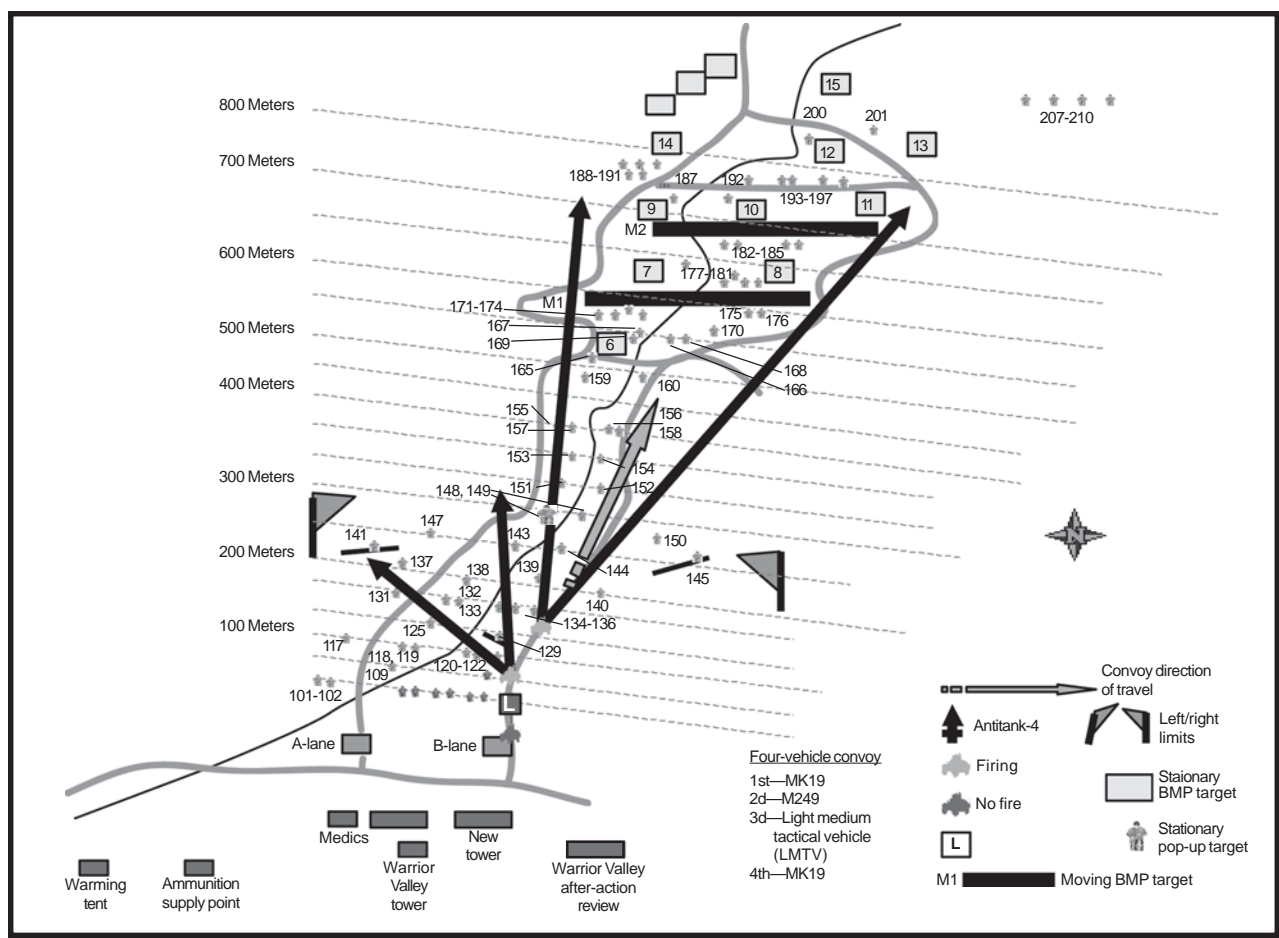


Figure 1. Diagram of a CLFX scenario

considered to be essential combat support elements routinely incorporated in battalion live-fire training exercises.

There are four essential components to be considered when setting up a CLFX:

Range and Training Areas. An optimal training area allows a squad to maneuver at least 5 kilometers, contains roads with bends and curves, and supports aviation or motor equipment (key assets to multi-echelon combined arms training). The area must

contain land and distance variations for a weapons mix—MK19s and squad automatic weapons—to be employed.

Targets. There should be a variety of targets (moving and stationary vehicles and pop-up silhouettes) that allow the gunner to manipulate the T&E or free-gun MK19, provide opportunities to shoot high and low, and provide squad and team leaders an opportunity to control fires. Figure 3, page 55, shows a detailed schematic for setting up targetry. This plan, along with the range fans shown in Figure 4, page 55, will help commanders and planners war-game the execution and calculate risk assessments.

Combat Arms Fire and Lift Support. These should simulate battlefield combat conditions. Sight and sound effects and real world support are necessary to train as a combined arms team. Squad leaders should be trained to communicate with gunships through frequency hopping and the use of close air support fire and control procedures. These tasks will be required on the modern nonlinear battlefield.

Observer-Controller (OC) and Safety Personnel. The OC maintains the exercise rules of

1. Assess mission-essential task list
2. Plan training
3. Train and certify leaders
4. Recon the site
5. Issue the plan
6. Rehearse
7. Execute
8. Conduct an after-action review
9. Retrain
10. Recover

Figure 2. Ten-Step Training Model

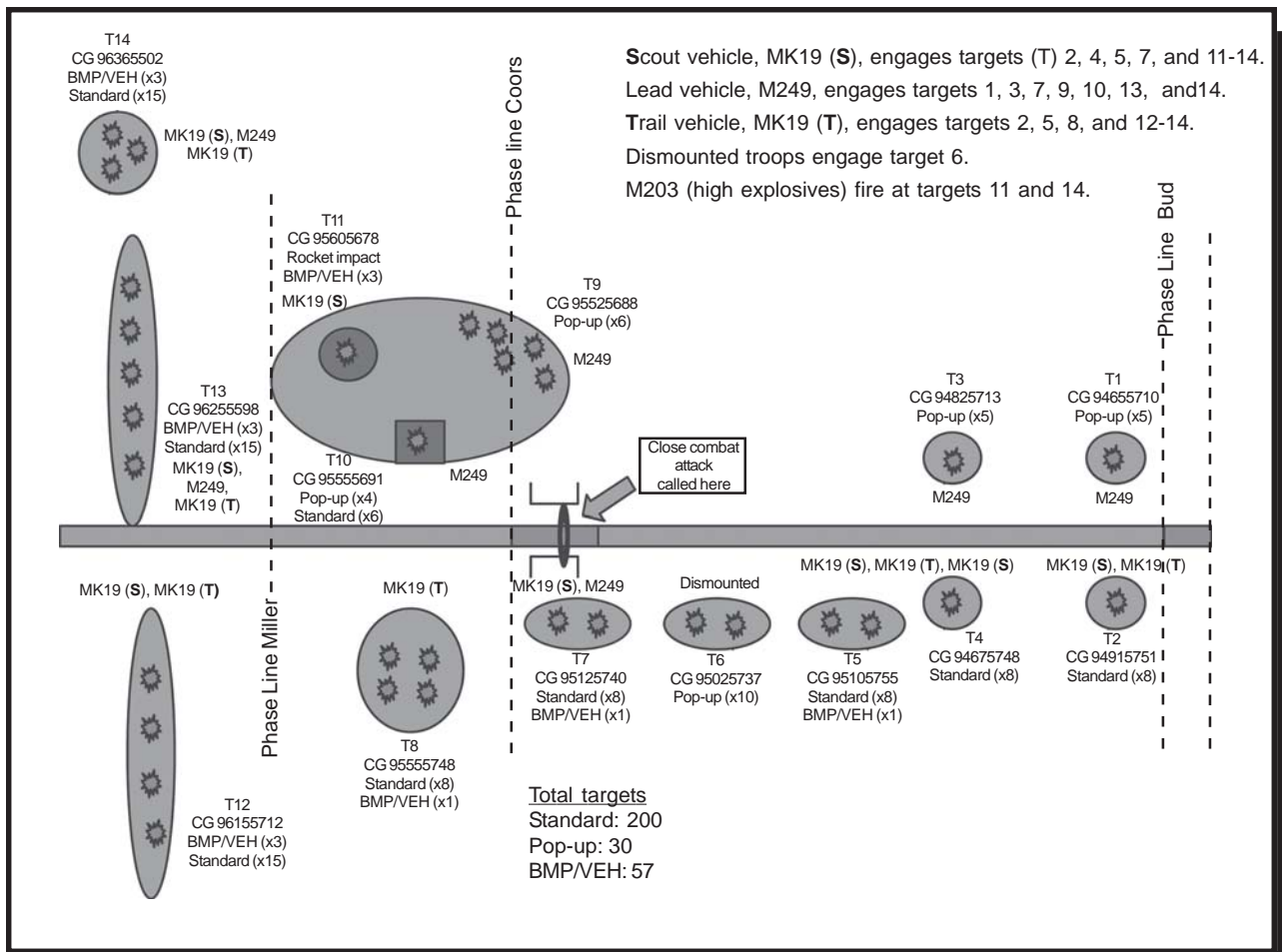


Figure 3. Targetry layout for BiSung Range

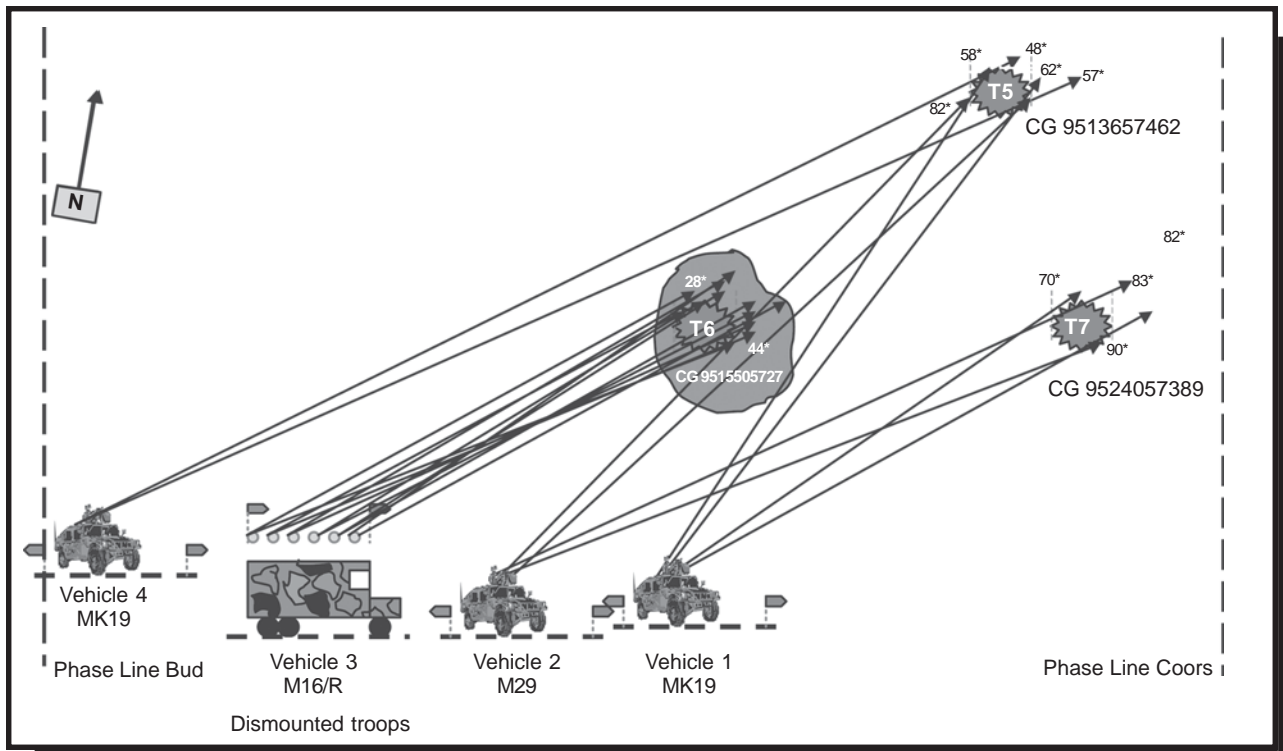


Figure 4. BiSung Range, Engagement Area 2

engagement and ensures that measurable standards are maintained through teaching and coaching. An important aspect of his duty is a full understanding of training execution through participation in the initial planning, coordination, development, and certification process. The OC should provide honest and constructive feedback based on Army Training and Evaluation Program/mission training plan checklists. Although range fans and target plans are formulated and war-gamed to reduce soldier risk, there is no substitute for a safety NCO. One person should never perform both OC and safety duties.

Conclusion

The 94th Military Police Battalion continues to build upon success by maintaining the highest level of combat readiness. Soldiers confident in their leaders, training, equipment, and themselves create a formula for success as they continue to prepare to fight.



Soldiers perform vehicle and equipment sling-load operations—the first such operation performed by military police on the Korean Peninsula.